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The correction of papers.



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THE CORRECTION OF PAPERS¹

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If the good will of my readers may be caught in the ancient fashion, let me say at once that the following remarks are based upon eleven years' experience in the correction of papers, during which I have not consciously neglected the obligations arising from the nature of the work. In the course of a decade one is likely to scrutinize such obligations, and to search for the principles that underlie them.

The principles lie bare when we discover the real significance of our topic. What, then, does "the correction of papers" actually mean? Briefly, it means the correction, or straightening, or normalizing of one personality by another through the instrumentality of truth expressed in language. At least two personalities are concerned; and between A, the teacher, and B, the taught, lies the medium of the vernacular or some other tongue, representing a third element that needs consideration. A and B have each their rights as well as their duties, which require careful adjustment. They have also their relations to some larger group, of which they are individual members; as their studies involve the welfare of the national language, there are mutual obligations existing between them and C, the State; for it will hardly be denied that education is the chief affair of state, or that an ability to think, and to tell the truth, is the principal end of education.

In taking up the rights and duties of both teacher and pupil with reference to the national language, I shall advocate no hard-and-fast procedure for the classroom. We have had perhaps too much prescription of rules in the teaching of English, and too little discussion of first principles which the teacher may assimilate, and, when they have become a regulative force in his life, may instinctively apply in the varying circumstances of his profession. My

¹ An address delivered at the College Conference on English in the Central Atlantic States, Albany, November 29, 1913, slightly altered for the present form of publication.

aim is simply to encourage others in thinking about the fundamental obligations I have mentioned, and to suggest an ideal balance among them—something not in all respects within easy grasp, it may be, yet not, on the whole, so far beyond our reach that we cannot profitably strive to attain it. In order to suggest this ideal, it may be necessary to lay stress on certain elements in the problem of teaching English which are in danger of neglect—the rights of the State, for instance, in respect to the purity of the national language; and it may be useless to dwell at length upon those elements which commonly receive undue attention—as, for example, the claims of the mediocre to an education that is quite superficial.

Let us begin with the medium of utterance. First of all, it behooves us to remember that language, in its essence, is something spoken, and that speech lies closer to the personality we wish to correct than does writing. Hence the need of having the student read many of his exercises aloud, so that he may acquire the habit of uttering premeditated truth, may receive correction by word of mouth, and may reform a number of his thoughts and phrases with the living voice.

Now we cannot divorce language from the substance of which it is the expression. This substance, again, flows from the mind of the writer or speaker, but before that it has entered into his mind from sources without. In a sense, then, the correction of a theme or essay should begin with the sources of information, as it must end with the details of usage. Be this as it may, the first demand we make of language, whether spoken or written, is that it represent some portion of truth that deserves communication. Can we assume that the student in his last year at school, or in his first year at college, or indeed at any early stage, will have something worthy of utterance, if he is left to his own devices, or to chance, in his selection of subjects? So far as my experience with the undergraduate goes, we cannot safely assume it. We must know in advance that his mind has been filled, and we must know with what it has been filled; we must see to it that he has materials of thought, and that the materials are well in excess of all draughts we are likely to make upon them when we ask for written compositions. Emptiness of mind is a serious flaw in the writer of a

theme, and needs correction. We must see to all this because the first and sharpest of censures must be uttered when the student undertakes to write upon a subject of which he knows nothing. In the study of the vernacular, so close as this is to the soul of the learner, it is perilous to dally with the truth. We dare not let our pupils infer from our treatment of their compositions that the truth can ever be a secondary matter, or that substance is of less account than the way one manipulates it.

The truth of the individual thoughts is the first consideration. Next in importance comes their sequence. Here is a topic which our present generation is not likely to forget, much attention being paid to it in our manuals of composition. Yet there is something more to be said about it. Not only must we expect a sequence in the matter which a student on a given day exhibits in his theme; but there is an order, by no means superficial, which the immature pupil cannot be expected to provide in his work—which nevertheless must be forthcoming—namely, a substantial order in the tasks that are assigned from week to week and from month to month in a course of systematic study. An essential progress in the thinking of the student must be assured. How can this be brought about? The following is one suggestion. Let the teacher of English restrict the subject-matter of his courses to the field he is supposed to know. Within this field let him select a body of material that is interesting to him, and at the same time is not beyond the capacity of his class. In preparing to teach his chosen material, let him meditate long upon the point where he must begin if he is to attain his object, and longer yet upon this object, that is, upon the precise end he wishes to reach with his group of learners by the close of the year. Let the writing of his students deal with successive parts of that material, and let the correction of papers, like any other educational device, be at all times subservient to the end he has in view, namely, to convert unfed, unorganized, unsensitive minds into minds that are well-nourished, orderly, and sensitive. Otherwise he may wage an unceasing strife with the external symptoms of illiteracy, and never touch the inner seat of weakness and disease.

But we are verging on the duties of the teacher. What, in

general, may we demand of the personality that is engaged in correcting others through the medium of the vernacular? First, the teacher must have had the right sort of personality to begin with; this affords the only guaranty that he will have sought out and received the right sort of training before he enters upon his profession. It is almost indispensable that he come from a family where good books are read and a good custom is observed in speaking. It is absolutely indispensable that from early youth he shall have been a reader of the best things. He must be so familiar with the masterpieces of literature that he has a standard of good sense and good English within him. He must be a well of English undefiled. Late-learners may have their use in the teaching of other subjects; they will not do for English. Mere conscious rules, acquired when one has reached maturity, will never take the place of a correct habit; they cannot rectify a vicious tendency in one's mode of utterance, they cannot change one's mental disposition.

Yet the only proper complement of natural aptitude and correct habit is adequate professional training:

To me nor art without rich gifts of mind,
Nor yet mere genius rude and unrefined,
Seems equal to the task. They each require
The aid of each, and must as friends conspire.

Our guardians of usage must have some such education as the poets and orators who have enriched, refined, and established the English tongue. Upon this great topic I may not enlarge. Suffice it to say that a candidate for the teaching of English in the preparatory school should have a thorough grounding in Latin (if possible also in Greek), a substantial knowledge of all the ancient literary masterpieces—of the Latin mainly at first hand, and of the Greek at least through translations. In addition to the Bachelor's degree he should have a year of special work in the theory of poetry, reaching back from Shelley and Sidney to Aristotle, and accompanied by judicious reading in the chief English poets; in Old and Middle English, so that he may see the modern literature in due perspective, and may be able to consult a historical dictionary of the language

with intelligence; and perhaps in the development of prose, beginning with Cicero and Quintilian and coming down to Burke and Newman. Quintilian, at all events, should not be omitted, as the very best advice on composition and the correction of errors is to be found in him. The prospective teacher of English in the college or university should have something more. He should have the literary insight and human sympathy that come from a full three years of special preparation under competent guidance.

In any case, the corrector of personalities has a right, nay, a duty—his primary right, and his essential duty—to live, and to live abundantly. Nothing could be worse than a teacher of English who is half-dead or half-alive, from whatever cause. A half-trained instructor may be deemed to be only half-alive. But suppose he has the natural endowment and the acquired training that the teacher needs; one requisite to the continuance of his life is leisure for study. Not only that, but he must have the strength and the inspiration as well, and also the incentive. In reinforcing what has just been said, let us mention a few things a university instructor in English ought not to be. He ought not to be untrained in any branch that is essential to an understanding of the English language and literature. He ought not to be a person who affects to despise scholarship. He ought not to be lacking in ambition, or on any score unworthy or hopeless of advancement in his profession. Furthermore, he ought not to be overburdened, stultified, or disheartened with the reading of excessive amounts of uninspiring manuscript. There must not be an overplus of uninteresting sentences and paragraphs in the sum-total of what he reads, but the reverse: he must have more hours for Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton than for Freshman themes; otherwise he will begin to die—to die at the top, so to speak. It is his right and duty to be a vital influence in the lives he is supposed to be shaping. The personalities intrusted to him he may shape for better or for worse. It is hardly conceivable that he will not modify them at all. Yet if there are three possibilities, only one of them is tolerable. He must not leave his timber as it is, he must not warp it more, he must straighten it; and this requires ever-renewed vitality.

And what of the timber? What are the rights and duties of the personalities to be corrected? I shall not speak of what is patent, that is, of obligations that spontaneously suggest themselves on a superficial consideration, as the right of the pupil to the best kind of correction. No teaching could be too good for our land of promise, with the civilization here to be developed. This is obvious. When we penetrate deeper, we note, first of all, that not every person has the same right to an education in the vernacular. An idiot, for example, has not the same right as a genius, nor in general have those who are below the average in capacity or attainments the same right as those who are above it. Doubtless every one in a sense has a claim to instruction in English, but the point is that some have a better claim, or a claim to more of it, than others. Who are these? Clearly, as has been suggested, they who have the greater capacity. It is a law of nature that to those who have shall be given. In our teaching we may well observe the tendencies of nature, following her laws, and aiding her in the accomplishment of her purposes. It is said that "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth." An easy application of the text may be made to the teaching of English composition.

Moreover, they who show promise have a right not to be herded in classes so large as to be unmanageable, where the individual is lost, and where the teacher, instead of being lifted up and drawing young men after him, must descend to their level, and appeal to the spirit, not of a social group, but of a mob. Extremes should be avoided. Large portions of time should not be lavished on the correction of single individuals or knots of two or three, unless these persons are extraordinarily gifted or exceedingly well-trained. On the other hand, an hour devoted to a class of ten or twelve is likely to produce results more potent and lasting than will three hours a week devoted to a class of thirty. Accordingly, with a given complement of instructors, and a given number of hours for English in the curriculum, it is better to divide our forty-five or thirty students into sections of fifteen or ten, so as to teach them properly when we teach at all. It has been my experience that Freshmen and Sophomores will study more, and will prepare better compositions, when they must read their work aloud before a dozen

of their fellows whom they have come to know as individuals, and in the presence of a teacher whom they know in an intimate way, than under any other external conditions. Assuming that the student of English is worthy of his teaching, he has a right, not only to the best kind of teacher, but also to the best educational conditions.

Another right of the student may be stated thus. We must not require him to read books too rapidly, or to compose too many themes. How many teachers of English have a clear conscience as to their demands on either score? And who shall guard those guardians if they lack a conscience? Better a little reading carefully done, and a little writing based upon adequate thought and reading, than much hasty work of any sort. "No matter how slow the style be at first," says Ben Jonson, "so it be labored and accurate." Connected with his right to an opportunity for thought, and to leisure for the slow and often painful business of expression, is the just and proper claim of the student to some adequate form of publication or utterance. It is unfair to ask him to write week after week, and month after month, without a single chance to produce his best in the hearing of his fellows. In general, when they are not thus presented, let him take charge of his own papers, since he is the one who is most interested in them. It is bad for the teacher to stupefy himself with them in private, and the morality of throwing them into the waste-basket is doubtful. Worse still is an unseen public of one, an assistant, not the teacher, who comes into no personal contact with the pupil, and whose humanity touches the soul of the writer of a theme only through hieroglyphics on its margin.

Finally, if a youth has a right to any teaching whatsoever, he has a right to sympathetic treatment from the person who corrects him. The impulse to correct, which is natural, and is very strong in some teachers, is good only when, like other natural impulses, it is properly regulated. Doubtless we are all acquainted with pedantic men who cannot bridle their tongues when another tongue has made a slip, or withhold their censure if another's pen has gone astray. I am far from arguing against rigorous correction at intervals; but the wise and sympathetic teacher is likely to suppress

something like five out of six impulses to chastise a fault, keeping ever in mind the advice of Ben Jonson, who says: "There is a time to be given all things for maturity, and that even your country husbandman can teach, who to a young plant will not put the pruning-knife, because it seems to fear the iron, as not able to admit the scar. No more would I tell a green writer all his faults, lest I should make him grieve and faint, and at last despair. For nothing doth more hurt than to make him so afraid of all things as he can endeavor nothing."

As to the duties of the pupil little need be said. He must try to tell the truth, and to express it distinctly, in speech as well as in writing. He must learn to be self-critical, so that he may correct himself. This will be accomplished when he is taught to respect the rights of others in the subject he is studying or explaining. His audience has a right to a clear and orderly exposition, and to correct usage. The word he employs must correspond to the object he has in mind, and must mean the same thing to others as to him. Hence it must accord with the meaning in the dictionary. I plead for a generous use of the dictionary in the teaching of English.

Let us pass to the rights and duties of the State. With reference to the vernacular its main duty is no secret. It must provide and encourage able and well-trained teachers, according them ample means of subsistence and a degree of honor not far short of the highest. On this head we may give ear to the words of Milton as they are quoted by Lord Morley for a similar purpose:

Whoever in a state knows how wisely to form the manners of men, and to rule them at home and in war with excellent institutes, him in the first place, above others, I should esteem worthy of all honor. But next to him the man who strives to establish in maxims and rules the method and habit of speaking and writing received from a good age of the nation, and, as it were, to fortify the same round with a kind of wall, the daring to overleap which let a law only short of that of Romulus be used to prevent. . . . The one, as I believe, supplies noble courage and intrepid counsels against an enemy invading the territory. The other takes to himself the task of extirpating and defeating, by means of a learned detective police of ears, and a light band of good authors, that barbarism which makes inroads upon the minds of men, and is a destructive intestine enemy of genius. Nor is it to be considered of small consequence what language, pure or corrupt, a people has, or what is their customary degree of propriety in speaking it. . . . For, let the words of a

country be in part unhandsome and offensive in themselves, in part debased by wear and wrongly uttered; and what do they declare but, by no light indication, that the inhabitants of that country are an indolent, idly-yawning race, with minds already long prepared for any amount of servility? On the other hand, we have never heard that any empire, any state, did not at least flourish in a middling degree as long as its own liking and care for its language lasted.¹

So much for Milton's letter to Bonmattei, with the warning it contains for our own generation and the application we may make of it to the duties of the State. Turning now to the question of rights, one may argue as follows. The State demands an education in the vernacular which shall do the greatest good to the greatest number; this does not necessarily mean conferring an equal benefit upon every individual. Under certain circumstances it might signify the careful education of a few because of the preponderant influence to be exercised upon the language by a relatively small body of persons, such as poets, orators, clergymen, editors, and teachers; a small body, that is, as compared with the population as a whole. If we consider, not the present generation alone, but future generations also, as concerned in our present system of education, we may admit that thoroughly training a few persons of great capacity is of greater advantage to the State than a superficial or ostensible culture of many. Accordingly, my remarks on the correction of papers turn out to be a plea for cherishing the more gifted among our students who show promise of becoming influential in maintaining the purity of the English language. It is, above all, a plea for safeguarding the interests of those who may become teachers of English. Such a plea is never untimely; it cannot be urged too often. The rights of the average student are in no peril, save as they are involved in the rights of neglected potential leaders; and the claims of those who are below the average will not in this humanitarian age go unnoticed. The poor, and their champions, we have always with us.

¹ Morley, *Studies in Literature*, pp. 223, 224.

III

THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AND THE STUDY OF THE CLASSICS¹

On the present occasion I am expected, as a teacher of English, to address an audience chiefly made up of teachers of Greek and Latin on the "cultural value" of the classics. It is a large topic, which we must in some way restrict. There will be a suitable restriction if we discuss the value of an early training in Greek and Latin as it appears to a teacher of English after an experience of a dozen years with pupils in the modern subject; this done, it will not be improper to indulge in a few general reflections.

To begin with, let us have specially in mind the needs and the opportunities of first-rate students when they leave the preparatory school, and are not immediately to engage in active life. They are about to enter the academic course of a college or university, where they will be called upon to write numerous essays in the mother tongue, and to read not a few of the standard modern authors. What qualities, and what training, should we expect them to bring to these and such-like tasks? To write a fair essay demands a certain grade of general cultivation; and to sympathize with one of the great English poets—with Spenser or Milton, for example, or, let us say, with Coleridge—means that one must have something in common, in the way of training, with a man who wrote well, partly because of his genius, but partly also because he was well-taught. This immediately raises the question, how have the masters of the English tongue been educated—how have they learned to write?

Before suggesting an answer to this question, it may not be out of place to marvel at teachers of English, and of

¹ This paper was read before the Classical Association of the Atlantic States at its Eighth Annual Meeting, April 18, 1914.

other modern literatures, at our administrative officers in the higher education, and above all at our professors of pedagogy, for their general lack of interest in certain inquiries which no teacher, and no leader in the art of teaching, should ever neglect. Their interests commonly are of another sort. They have traced the history of various movements in education, and they can tell you, it may be, what Plato and Comenius, or Herbart and Rousseau, have said or thought about the discipline of youth; they can even explain the relation of experimental psychology to what we used to call "mental arithmetic;" but they have given little heed to the way in which great teachers actually have taught, or men of acknowledged attainments have acquired their power. We need not pursue this line of thought beyond remarking that the authors in whose works our collegians must read, and about whom they must write, have, almost to a man, had a classical training, and have not secured their command over the English tongue without an acquaintance with Greek and Latin. The record of the studies of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning, and of Chatham, Burke, and Newman, represents the great experiment in English education—an experiment lasting thru centuries, a successful one, and one whose results no teacher or theorist on teaching can safely disregard.

So much in general; it may be wise to add a concrete illustration. Let us attend to the weekly routine of the upper class in Christ's Hospital, the school where Samuel Taylor Coleridge was prepared for Cambridge, and was inflamed with a love of English; where, in fact, he laid the foundations of a literary training. Here is approximately what he and the best of his fellow-pupils, the "Senior Grecians," were doing at a charity school at London in the year 1790:

Monday morning: Homer or Tragic Chorus by heart; Greek Tragedy.
Monday afternoon: Hebrew Psalter; Horace or Juvenal. Written exercise for Monday: English and Latin Theme, in alternate weeks.

Tuesday morning: Xenophon at sight; Homer. Tuesday afternoon: Mathematical Scholium. Exercise for Tuesday: Huntingford's Greek Exercises.

Wednesday morning: Cicero's Orations at sight; Livy or Cicero. Wednesday afternoon: English Speaking; Tacitus. Exercise for Wednesday: Greek Translation.

Thursday morning: Virgil by heart; Demosthenes. Thursday afternoon: Mathematical Scholium. Exercise for Thursday: Greek Verses, and Translation from English into Latin.

Friday morning: Horace or Juvenal by heart; Greek Tragedy or Aristophanes. Friday afternoon: Hebrew; Latin Speaking. Exercise for Friday: Latin Translation.

Saturday morning: Seale's Metres; Repetition. Exercise for Saturday: Latin and English Verses alternately, with an abstract.

"As the time of continuance on the Grecian's form is always three, and generally four years," says the historian of the school, "a very considerable acquaintance with the higher classics, as well as a readiness in the composition of English, Greek, and Latin, verse and prose, is easily attainable within this period, and forms a substantial groundwork for the more extensive researches of academical study." "At school," says Coleridge himself, "I enjoyed the inestimable advantage of a very sensible, tho at the same time a very severe master [the Rev. James Boyer]. He early moulded my taste to the preference of Demosthenes to Cicero, of Homer and Theocritus to Virgil, and again of Virgil to Ovid. He habituated me to compare Lucretius, (in such extracts as I then read) Terence, and above all the chaster poems of Catullus, not only with the Roman poets of the, so-called, silver and brazen ages, but with even those of the Augustan era; and on grounds of plain sense and universal logic to see and assert the superiority of the former in the truth and nativeness both of their thoughts and diction. At the same time that we were studying the Greek tragic poets, he made us read Shakespeare and Milton as lessons; and they were the lessons, too, which required most time and trouble to 'bring up' so as to escape his censure. I learnt from him that poetry, even that of the loftiest and, seemingly, that of the wildest odes, had a logic of its own, as severe as that of science, and more difficult, because more subtle, more complex, and dependent upon more, and more fugitive causes. In the truly great poets, he would say, there is a reason assignable, not only for every word, but for the position of every word."

This, then, is the way in which the great experiment, if one may so describe it, worked out in a particular instance. Such instances might be multiplied; and the inference as to the nature of a liberal education, which means an education in good taste, could not be disregarded. But the experiment of a classical training still continues, nor can we disregard the results as they appear, or are wanting, in the successive generations of young men and women who throng to our higher institutions of learning in search of what is termed culture. What can we discover from a scrutiny of our students?

First, those relatively few young persons of our day who possess an adequate grounding in Greek and Latin have this in common with the English poets: they know something about grammar—not English grammar specifically, nor Greek, nor Latin, but grammar in general. They recognize subject, copula, and predicate whenever they meet them; they have an understanding for order and relation in the parts of a sentence. They are accustomed to see the elements of language as elements, and are not incapable of arranging them. They know the difference between a temporal and a causal connective; they can distinguish between *post hoc* and *propter hoc*—a highly important distinction in life. The reason they can do so is that, whereas it is possible to express oneself either loosely or distinctly in English, according to one's previous education, both Greek and Latin compel the schoolboy to make a sharp distinction between one thought and another. This is precisely what those who have mist a severe linguistic training are never prone to do. An observant teacher should know whereof he speaks. He should know why he is glad to welcome students of Latin and Greek to his classes in English. There may be exceptions; if so, these are negligible. In the long run, they who have done well with Greek or Latin in the preparatory school can write passable English as freshmen, and they who have had neither are ungrammatical and otherwise slovenly in usage.

Next, the youth with a classical training has a superior knowledge, not only of connectives that are by themselves non-significant, but also of the significant elements in the English vocabulary. In particular, as compared with the youth who lacks that training, he recognizes and can use what we call "learned words;" that is, the word which an educated man employs, and an uneducated man does not. Year after year one may toil with uneducated sophomores over the sixth stanza of Coleridge's *Dejection, an Ode*, that stanza in which the author has epitomized his tragic life. And why this recurrent toil? Because the poet has made use of terms like *resource*, *research*, and *abstruse*—

And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man—
This was my sole resource—

which fifteen out of twenty in a class will mispronounce, and which they do not comprehend, being unfamiliar with the Latin element in modern French and English. The ugly combination "résearch work" (and who is responsible for this pronunciation?) does not, one may guess, occur in any English poet. Our fifteen sophomores will dimly gather what the combination signifies, because in *work* they see their ancient foe; they will look wise or otherwise when told that *research* is a "learned" word; they will smile when they hear that its fellow is one of those that competent students of Latin and English call "popular."

Again, the fit tho few among those who engage in the study of English have more orderly minds for the larger details, as well as the smaller, in written composition. They excel their untutored comrades in joining sentence to sentence when they build up a paragraph, and in linking paragraph to paragraph to form an essay. And why is this? Because the fit tho few have had their mental operations regulated by a progress thru some portions of Greek and Latin literature; and because the Greek and Latin authors that have come down to us differ from the rank and file of modern authors in possessing a more excellent sequence of thought. We ought forthwith to guard against any misapprehension that the ancient classics are to be deemed in all ways superior to modern literature. On the contrary, it is evident that in developing a boy of our generation into a clear-headed gentleman, if the ancients will help more in making him clear-headed (and yet to some extent gentle as well), the modern writers, or some of them, can perform the greater service in creating within him a clean and tender heart. The fact remains, however, that in Sophocles the train of thought is more cogent than in Shakespeare, as the internal order of a speech in the *Odyssey* is more lucid than in *Paradise Lost*.

Further, the boy with the classical training, since he is

not so apt to be muddle-headed, is more likely to discriminate against false sentiment in what he reads, and still more likely to object to metrical bombast or nonsense when it is offered him as poetry. "Coleridge!" said his redoubtable teacher at Christ's Hospital, "the connections of a declamation are not the transitions of poetry. Bad, however, as they are, they are better than apostrophes and 'O thou's,' for at the worst they are something like common sense." Since the time of Coleridge, the besetting sin of poets has been a lack of precision and good sense. In her fumbling description of *A lost chord*, Adelaide Procter writes:

It seemed the harmonious echo
From our discordant life.

The echo of a discord is not harmonious. A boy who has studied the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid is aware that in literature as in his own experience an echo is true when it closely resembles the original sound. As an able critic notes: "Sentimentality has, in this disguise or that, existed and poisoned English poetry at all times since the sixteenth century. But, for its fellow vice, vagueness, this is otherwise. For vagueness there has indeed been no time so fertile as the first forty years of the nineteenth century." The beginning of the twentieth century is not free from it. Greek poetry in the fifth century before Christ is not vague or sentimental, nor is Homer or Virgil. When he is imbued with the spirit of Greek and Latin verse, our Freshman is in some measure armed against the insidious attacks of bad taste. And that is why the aged Wordsworth advised his nephew: "Remember, first read the ancient classical authors; *then* come to *us*; and you will be able to judge for yourself which of us is worth reading."

Finally, the boy who has been drilled in the classics has an immense advantage because he knows something of ancient story—of ancient mythology in the wide sense—and is not unacquainted with those living images, divine yet human, in which the ancients embodied their highest conceptions of man, and their noblest religious convictions,

the head and front of their culture. In dealing with English authors, he is not continually checked and baffled by allusions which were intended to be clear, and are so to an educated public. To the boy who is otherwise trained, that is, untrained for the study of English, they are not clear, and may envelop in an atmosphere of uncertainty passage after passage in any substantial author that he happens to take up. Can he appreciate George Eliot in *Romola* when she likens the shifty Tito Melema to Bacchus, if he is wholly innocent of ancient ideas concerning the slippery and unstable Dionysus? And how can he read Milton if he is unfamiliar, not only with the *Bible*, but also with Homer and Virgil? For, be it noted that, whatever the reason, a decline of interest in the Scriptures has gone hand in hand with a growing indifference to the literature of Greece and Rome. Indeed, one is reminded that Charles the Great, at a critical juncture for modern civilization, enjoined the study of letters, that is, of Latin, upon his clergy, in order that the study of the Scriptures might not languish in his realm. Would that a modern statesman might arise with equal power to influence our general education, and that shortly no one having the name of a cultivated man might be unable to read at first hand the most sublime of all mysteries, in the Greek of the *New Testament*! The boy with a classical training has immediate access to the highest ideal of mankind.

In this gamut of advantages we have run from small details to large considerations. We began with the discipline a youth may receive thru Greek and Latin in using the elements of expression; we have come to the benefit he may derive from these subjects in the interpretation of human discourse as a whole, and in the assimilation of humanizing ideas. It is common, of course, to separate the disciplinary function of the classics from the cultural; it is better to assume that no such cleavage exists. One never can draw a sharp line of demarcation between the form of expression and the idea that is expressed, or view the spirit apart from the letter thru which it is revealed. And as long as this is so,

literary discipline, involving a detailed examination of language, cannot be severed from literary culture.

In fact, these remarks will have been in vain if they have not led up to the notion that all culture is unified, and that its final aim is this: to eliminate the trivial and the false from our ideal of humanity; to abstract from the best sources, however minute or distant, whatever will define and ennoble that ideal; and to transmit an ever more vital image of humanity for daily contemplation by the next and succeeding generations. This is what teachers of the humanities are striving to do whether they know it or not, and whether they deal with Greek and Latin, or with French or German or English. As a teacher of English, inspired with a belief in the unity of culture, I have wished in this presence to support the contention that, as in the history of Europe, so in the development of the individual American, the basic elements of this ideal are most promptly secured thru direct contact with Greek and Latin. When a foundation has been laid by competent instruction in the elements, we teachers of the modern Christian literatures can proceed with the superstructure.

This paper is primarily addrest to teachers of the classics, secondarily to principals of schools and other men of influence in preparatory education.

To the teachers of the classics one may say: There is at this time great need of mutual recognition and support among all the friends of culture in America; but perhaps the need is greatest as between scholars in the ancient languages and students of the modern vernacular. They depend upon each other in performing their due service to the state; for the teaching of the ancient classics without observing their relation to modern life is only less futile than the study of English when it is dissociated from the accumulated experience of the past. Yet we should not exclude from our ideal organization any person whatsoever who contributes to the enriching and intensifying of human life. And perhaps, all told, the friends of real as opposed to ostensible culture are not so few as we teachers sometimes

imagine. Few or many, if they would but make their cause a common one, they would hold the fort against every assault. The foes of culture, the haters of ideas and ideals are many—how often are they haters of Greek!—and the officious heralds of a shallow and meaningless culture, who abhor the industry without which no cultivation ever was obtained, may be fraudulent and dangerous. They are not and can not be at one in their efforts, however, since they have nothing positive to unite them; but they do succeed in deterring young people who are ignorant of what is good and bad in education from taking up the proper studies at the proper time.

The foe is numerous but unorganized. On what ground can the friends of culture best unite? To what practical effort can we teachers of the humanities most profitably devote our superabundant strength? To the maintenance and advancement of the study of Greek. Let us concentrate our defence where the attack is most frequent. If Greek were eventually to disappear from the curriculum of all the schools, Latin in no long time would follow, and sooner or later the serious study of modern languages and literatures would be discountenanced, too. Every blow that is dealt for Greek is favorable to humane learning in its entirety. If Greek is duly cared for, Latin will take care of itself, and so will English. If the teachers of all these subjects would combine for the rehabilitation of Greek, no enemy could withstand them. The program is simple: all we need do is to have the faith of the Centurion, and advise a small number of promising young men and women every year to begin the study of Greek.

There are, indeed, signs of hope for the future. If I am not deceived, the cause of Greek is now growing stronger in the eastern section of the country; the conservative South has never lost its hold upon the subject; and the great Middle West is imitative in matters of education, so that a renaissance of any sort in New England would ere long be duplicated in those western sections which draw so many of their teachers from the older universities. One thing,

at least, is very significant. Within the last year or two, our teachers of the classics, if I may be allowed to say so, have become noticeably less apologetic in their speech and attitude; they are growing more and more courageous. It would seem that they only need to act as if they were not losing but winning, and to recognize and abet their friends in other subjects. As for some teachers of Latin, they might well manifest at least a higher selfishness, and not be penny-wise. Too many have been merely bent on saving themselves for the moment, instead of rushing to defend the point where the enemy has been most successful. As for the teachers of the modern languages, they should act upon the knowledge they have; they are aware that a first-hand acquaintance with the classics is the indispensable prerequisite to any real insight into Italian, Spanish, English, French, and German.

To the principals of secondary schools one might speak in a different way, and as follows: The arguments in support of Greek and Latin are many and varied; it is impossible to arrange and develop them here. All of them doubtless are contained in Professor Kelsey's collection of papers, by various hands, in the volume entitled *Latin and Greek in American Education* (published by the Macmillan Company). It is hard to believe that any one could resist the evidence in that volume; but it will do no harm to refer to another book, by that eminent teacher in Russia, Professor Zielinski. His lectures on *Our debt to antiquity* enable one to see that the present chaos in American education has a parallel in another country.

The special point for every sensible man who has a voice in guiding our secondary education is this: Either the arguments advanced by those who have studied the classics to some purpose are sound and convincing, or they are not. For nine out of ten bright boys and girls, Greek either does what it is said to do, or it does not. We may leave out of account the rare exception of a brilliant mind that is, so to speak, incapable of learning this language. We hear of such minds, and one is inclined to believe they

exist; but I must add that I never have met one. The capable boys I have known, and some dull ones, too, have been able to master the subject when they have not suffered from bad teaching. And we may also disregard the incompetent teacher of Greek; the pedant who does not make his pupils read as soon as they can, and lets them form the bad habit of treating the language as if it were a Chinese puzzle; or the ignoramus who himself is unable to read continuously in either of the ancient tongues. These scattered individuals we may pass by. In general, it is safe to say, the teachers of the classics are trained to do their duty, and they perform their office better, on the whole, than any other set of instructors—especially in the high school. To return, then: Either Greek affects the subsequent career of the pupil as it is said to affect him, or it does not. If it does not, we are free to neglect it in our schools. But if it does, we are bound to promote this study unless we are willing to lose our own self-respect. If one never has read Greek, or, having read it long ago, has forgotten the experience, how can one decide the question of its value? No doubt the books of Kelsey and Zielinski would assist one in forming an independent judgment; but it would be desirable also to consult a number of the masterpieces themselves, at least in translation. One might read the *Republic* of Plato in the version of Jowett, and the *Nicomachean ethics* of Aristotle as translated by Welldon, and then, let us say, the *Politics*. If, being previously unacquainted with those fountains of good sense and lofty inspiration, one were to find in them something of permanent value, it would be right to believe the persons who read the original as well as the pale translation, and who declare that the Greek is better than the English version. And finally one might consider what we owe to the boys and girls whose education has been entrusted to our hands by our nation and our Maker.

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